



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

September 3, 2013

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southeast
Attn: NAS Key West Airfield Operations EIS Project Manager
P.O. Box 30, Building 903
NAS Jacksonville, FL 32212

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for
Airfield Operations at Naval Air Station Key West, Florida.

EIS Project Manager:

Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 has reviewed both the U. S. Department of The Navy's Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Airfield Operations Naval Air Station (NAS) Key West, Florida. Under Section 309 of the CAA, EPA is responsible for reviewing and commenting on major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

The primary purpose of the proposed action is to sustain fleet training conducted at and associated with NAS Key West airfield for Navy tactical aviation and use by other DoD and federal agencies, while introducing new aircraft. The proposed action is needed in order to maintain the level of readiness mandated in Title 10 United States Code (USC) Part 5062. The Department of the Navy needs to continue use of NAS Key West to accomplish Navy and Marine Corps required aviation training. The Navy and DoD need to maintain the long-term viability of NAS Key West as a fleet training station for tactical aviation squadrons and for airfield operations and associated training in the Key West Range Complex by other DoD and federal agencies.

EPA understands that the Navy's preferred alternative (Alternative 2) supports the transition to next generation aircraft and provides flexibility to accommodate additional carrier aircraft air wing training locations around the United States. Under this preferred alternative, the total annual airfield operations could equal up to 52,000 flight operations.

EPA appreciates the responses to our comments (memo dated August 20, 2012) regarding noise in the Draft EIS, which are included in Section 7.3.1 (Noise) of the FEIS dated July 2013. Based on the information in the FEIS, It appears that the Navy has addressed our primary concerns on noise as it relates to airfield operations and its impacts to children and the Environmental Justice community. EPA also supports a comprehensive noise monitoring program to ensure that the ongoing impacts from military training are assessed and appropriately addressed/mitigated once identified. We recommend that the community be informed if there are any future changes to the preferred alternative. Once a Record of Decision (ROD) is signed, please forward a copy to this office.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments. If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Larry O. Gissentanna (404-562-8248 or Gissentanna.larry@epa.gov) of my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ramona K. McConney for". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Office of Environmental Accountability